



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: FWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime (406-461-0587)

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, October 10 – October 16, 2009

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2008 annual report) can be found at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

Trapping efforts are winding down given cooler weather and increased hunting-related recreation particularly on public land. Efforts may still occur in certain situations or on private lands where access is more controlled.

Hunters, other recreationists, and landowners can help FWP monitor the population by reporting wolf observations, tracks, or sign through the FWP online reporting button [Contact Us - Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks](#), by contacting the closest wolf specialist or FWP office, or mailing a wolf observation card.

Flights: None this week.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On 10/12, WS received a call of a wolf killed heifer in the Paradise Valley south of Livingston. The heifer was confirmed on 10/13 and a second heifer was found on the 13th and also confirmed killed by wolves. No radio collars were heard on site. FWP authorized WS to shoot one wolf and collar a second as it is unknown which pack was responsible for the depredation. A shoot on site permit was issued to the landowner for one wolf on his private ground.

On 10/13, WS investigated a report of a dead heifer in the Douglas Creek area east of Hall. The heifer was not killed by wolves but a single wolf had been feeding on the carcass. WS set traps to try to collar.

On 10/13, WS killed 1 wolf by helicopter in response to prior livestock conflicts in the Smart Creek area near Phillipsburg / Hall. Three wolves were seen together in the Upper Willow Creek area this

morning. WS was authorized to take 3 but were only able to shoot 1 uncollared gray due to heavy timber.

On 10/16, WS spoke with the owner of a lamb that had been killed and fed on the previous night. The incident, near Hamilton, was not wolf predation and coyote was suspected due to the size of the tracks.

Outreach and Education

On 10/15, Sime and Lance attended the Backcountry Horsemen meeting in Butte to give updates on the wolf program and the hunting season. About 18 people attended.

Sime and others with FWP and the USFWS fielded many calls from citizens and the media regarding the Montana wolf hunting season and other facets of the state's program. Many emails have also been received by both agencies.

Research Activities

Nothing to report at this time.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

Nothing to report at this time.

Other Updates

Northern Rockies Delisting Litigation

On 6/2, a coalition of 13 groups challenged the USFWS delisting decision in Federal District Court in Missoula (9th Circuit). On 8/20, a preliminary injunction request was filed, requesting that wolves be placed back on the Endangered Species list while the court decides the main case within the next year – thus preventing a fall hunting season in Montana and Idaho. On 9/8, the injunction request was denied, but the main lawsuit is moving forward. Written briefings by all parties will be completed by late January 2010. A hearing date for oral arguments has not been set, but is expected to be not long after completion of written briefings.

Montana state laws, administrative rules, and the federally-approved management plan remain in effect and wolves are classified and protected under Montana law as a species in need of management. The FWP Commission has the authority to issue rules and regulations regarding the protection and periodic taking of the animal (as through hunting seasons for example). FWP is the lead agency for wolves, assisted by USDA Wildlife Services if wolves are confirmed to have injured or killed livestock.

Montana 2009 Wolf Hunting Season:

In WMU 1, the backcountry wolf hunting season in the Bob Marshall Complex west of the continental divide is ongoing. As of 10/16, a total of 3 wolves had been harvested. A total of 38 wolves remain in the quota for WMU 1 and the season is still open.

In WMU 3, FWP closed the backcountry season in the Absaroka-Beartooth wilderness area on October 9. Nine wolves were harvested from September 15 to October 9. The total remaining quota for WMU 3 is 3 wolves and hunting can resume everywhere in WMU 3 except the Absaroka – Beartooth wilderness area (Deer/Elk Hunting District 316) on October 25.

During a conference call on 10/13, the FWP Commission endorsed this WMU 3 backcountry area closure and also endorsed FWP's recommendation that it not reopen to hunting concurrent with the general rifle season on October 25. Thus, the Absaroka – Beartooth wilderness area is permanently

closed to further wolf hunting in 2009. The area still remains open to hunting for elk, deer, and other species as authorized by the Commission in the respective species regulations. The Commission did not change the total statewide wolf quota of 75, nor did the Commission redistribute any of the individual WMU quotas that had been previously approved in July.

Wolves harvested during the early backcountry wilderness seasons count toward the total quota for the entire WMU. These backcountry wilderness areas are smaller geographical areas within the larger Wolf Management Units. For the most current harvest status information, call 1-800-385-7826.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

The next Board meeting is scheduled for October 23 in Room 152, Montana Capital Building. The agenda is available at [Montana Department of Livestock](http://livestock.mt.gov). Interested persons can listen on the Internet. The meeting will begin at 1:00pm. The meeting will be broadcast over the Internet at http://leg.mt.gov/css/Audio/audio_broadcast.asp. A video broadcast may also be available. Department of Livestock IT staff are currently working on the link. Once the link is established it will appear on Department of Livestock webpage listed under "Attached Agency Boards" at www.liv.mt.gov.

The program coordinator can be reached at 444-5609.

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To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP at: www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana at the statewide office: 657-6464. Or, call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp>. Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 444-5609.